

THE VALLEY OF LILIES

besought my Creator with ardent heart, would not He who is all merciful surely use mercy towards all these, and grant them all to be enkindled by the fire which would then be in me ? And what is it that impedes such great good ? Surely nought else but my sins. The fault cannot be on the side of the Creator, in whom there is no defect; it must, therefore, be in me and from me. When I consider how many and what great graces the Lord has so mercifully granted me, in order that I might become such as I have said, and still through my iniquities I am not such, which is dearly shown me in the evils that I see, I am wroth against myself and bewail my sins, albeit for this I do not despair, but always hope the more that He may pardon me and them." ¹

There were times, indeed, when she suffered much, needlessly, through this humility. Although bound by no vows (for the Dominican tertiaries did not then take the vows of Chastity, Poverty, and Obedience, even if there were many who, like herself, practised them in the highest degree), Catherine had resolved to render the most absolute obedience to the friar who, according to the time, was the director of the Mantellate and to their prioress, as also to her own confessor. And Raimondo tells us that she persevered so rigidly in this resolution that, as she lay dying, with all her tendency to self-accusation, she could not remember that she had ever even once not kept it. Indeed, he writes, " if this holy virgin had never had any other affliction while she lived, than what her very indiscreet directors inflicted upon her, she would, in some sort, have been a martyr by reason of her great patience. For they, in no wise understanding, and often not even believing the excellence of the gifts granted her from above, wished entirely to guide her along the road of the others who live in ordinary fashion, nor did they render honour to the presence of the Divine Majesty which was leading her by a wondrous way, albeit of that they continually saw the manifest signs ; like unto the Pharisees, who in such wise, seeing signs and prodigies, murmured at the healings which the Lord worked on

¹ *Legenda*, Prologue I. (§ 13).